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Matthew J. Wesaw Appointed to Michigan Advisory Committee of the United States Civil Rights Commission

Lansing – The Michigan Department of Civil Rights (MDCR) today announced that Director Matthew J. Wesaw has been appointed to serve on the United States Civil Rights Commission's (USCCR) Michigan Advisory Committee. The two-year appointment was effective as of January 29, 2015.

"Michigan has a long, proud tradition of being a leader in civil rights," Wesaw said. "I look forward to joining with other state leaders to continue to advocate fairness, equality and justice for all people."

Wesaw has been MDCR Director since November 2013. Prior to joining the department, he worked 26 years for the Michigan State Police and 6 years with the Michigan State Police Troopers Association. He has served as a tribal council member, vice chairman and past chairman of the federally-recognized Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians. Governor John Engler appointed Wesaw to the Commission on Indian Affairs and the Community Service Commission. Governor Jennifer Granholm appointed Wesaw to the Michigan Civil Rights Commission where he served for eight years, including as Chair from 2010 to 2012. Governor Rick Snyder appointed Wesaw to the Council on Law Enforcement and Reinvention Committee.

The USCCR was created by the Civil Rights Act of 1957 as an independent, bi-partisan federal agency whose mission is to inform the development of national civil rights policy and enhance the enforcement of federal civil rights laws. The USCCR is comprised of eight commissioners, half of whom are appointed by the President and half of whom are appointed by Congress. Fifty-one State Advisory Committees (representing all 50 states and the District of Columbia) are made up of citizen volunteers who are appointed by commissioners to assist with fact-finding, investigation and information sharing.

The newly-appointed Michigan Advisory Committee will also be led by a long-time MDCR employee. Donna Budnick, who worked for MDCR from 1997 to 2007 as the American Indian Affairs Specialist, has been reappointed to the committee and asked to serve as chairperson.

The first meeting of the Michigan Advisory Committee is expected to be scheduled soon.